

Testimony of

Diana Wohlhieter

Farmington Educator

Before the

Education Committee

March 15, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students.

I fully support higher starting salaries, the Teacher Tax Credit, and ending EdTPA. As a second career teacher with a master's degree and over 16 years experience, I find myself making less than my own children starting jobs right out of college. I started with a relatively low salary and have endured multiple step freezes over the years (including this year). As someone who paid into social security, albeit for less than 10 years, I am also facing the Windfall Elimination Provision and GPO when I retire in a few years. Had I known 17 years ago the financial position I would be in today, I would never have made a career change into teaching. I am disheartened that the CT legislature continues the WEP. It is a deterrent to second career or late entry teachers at a time when we should be making teaching an attractive and lucrative choice for someone at any time during their careers. It is no longer enough to say that teachers go into the profession not for the 'income', but for the 'outcome'. The teaching shortage in Connecticut will only improve when we compensate teachers fairly and give them the respect they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

